FEBRUARY, 1954
Vol. 9 No. 2
New South

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We Are Unnecessarily Excited

By BENJAMIN E. MAYS
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WE HERE in the deep South are unnecessarily excited over what decision the United States Supreme Court may hand down in the cases before it involving segregation in the public schools. I believe we are confusing the issue. Some of us think that the chief issue before the Supreme Court is whether or not Negro and white children will be allowed to attend the same public school. This is indeed an issue. And there is always an issue when traditions and laws which have governed people for decades are likely to be uprooted. But there is another issue, a much larger issue.

The main issue before us is this: Can the United States Supreme Court, representing the greatest democracy on earth, a nation that has assumed the economic and moral leadership of the world, announce to the world in 1954 that it believes in segregation based on color and race? Can the United States afford to say to a billion colored peoples in Asia, millions of colored peoples in Africa, the Middle East, South America, and the European democracies, that we believe in second class citizenship for 15,000,000 people — solely because their race is Negro and their complexion colored? Can the United States, perhaps the leading Christian nation on earth — certainly the nation with the highest percentage of church attendance — afford to tell the world that we place *race* above ability and *color* above character?

This is not a political issue. This is not a racial issue. This is a moral issue. It is not a local issue affecting only those of us who live in the deep South. The issue is world-wide and the decision the Supreme Court will make will affect our leadership in the world either for good or for ill. It is absolutely necessary that democracy win the allegiance of the peoples of Africa and Asia.

We are unduly excited because whether we like it or not the process of desegregation will be much slower than we think, and it will be easier than we think. It will be slower than we think for four reasons:

(1) If the Supreme Court declares segregation in the public schools unconstitutional, the decision will apply only to the five cases before it: Clarendon County, South Carolina; Prince Edward County, Virginia; the District of Columbia; Topeka, Kansas; and the one case in Delaware. Some localities

will move immediately toward desegregation as some states have done in the case of higher education, but others may have to be ordered to do so by the courts.

(2) In many parts of the South, Negro parents will move very cautiously. There will be "no run on the bank." They will not risk their children being embarrassed and for that reason they will not rush in just because the Supreme Court has voted against segregation. Proof for this view is seen in the case of interstate travel. Although a goodly number of Negroes ride across state lines unsegregated, the vast majority of Negroes ride segregated across state lines. It will be this way for a while in the public schools even after segregation has been declared unconstitutional. We all know that legalized segregation is a badge of inferiority, imposed by one group upon another. It stigmatizes the Negro as being unfit to move about as a free human being. The Negro wants the stigma removed so that he, too, can walk the earth with dignity. No man wants to be penalized for being what God made him. The Negro wants equality before God and equality before the law.

(3) Once Negroes have gained the right to attend non-segregated schools and once segregation by law has been knocked out, the cause for the pressure for non-segregation will have been removed. There will be a tendency for Negroes to relax. The very fact that the law says to Negroes, "You cannot" and "You must not," makes them determined to get the law changed. Human nature is like that. In many areas of the North, Negroes are free to worship in white churches but they prefer the Negro church where they hold membership and where their fathers and mothers were members. Riverside church in New York has been opened to Negroes for decades and yet the Negro churches in Harlem are packed to capacity with only a few Negroes in the membership at Riverside. This will be the case in the public schools if the Negro school is first rate.

(4) Then there is the problem of residential segregation. Both in the North and in the South Negroes are segregated. Even in the North there are segregated schools due mainly to the fact that the people who live in the area are either Negroes or whites. This pattern will be followed in the South. There will be more mixture in some places than in others. In many areas there will be no mixture for some time to come. It is for these four reasons that integration or desegregation will be slower than we think.

We are unnecessarily excited because recent experiences indicate that there is nothing to fear. Desegregation will be easier than we think because it has been in process fifteen years or more and no calamity has fallen upon the South. When the white primary was declared unconstitutional, Negroes voted and there was no revolution. When the Supreme Court made it possible for Negroes to eat unsegregated in the dining car and to travel as interstate passengers unsegregated the travelling white public accepted it. When the federal courts ruled in favor of Negroes attending white universities in the South, the Negro students were enrolled and there was no revolution down South. Negroes are enrolled in every southern state university except in South

Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi. The Supreme Court has ruled that residential segregation cannot be enforced by law. There have been no race riots as a result of it. Segregation in the armed services is almost a thing of the past and nobody is disturbed. The prophets of doom who predicted catastrophe if these changes were made were wrong, and I predict that the current prophets of doom will be equally wrong. And we must never forget that there are thirty-one states in this great nation of ours that have no segregation based on law.

It is human nature to fear the unknown and the untried. Less than a century ago this country was terribly upset over women's suffrage and the education of women. In 1872, eighty-one short years ago, Susan B. Anthony was arrested, brought to trial and found guilty of a crime, and fined $100 because she voted in a November election. It was argued that if women were educated the home would be destroyed and women would not want to bear and rear children. Today women are being educated on a parity with men. They hold virtually every degree that men hold and they still fall in love, get married, bear children and rear them, Ph.D.'s notwithstanding. A few years from now we will see that we were excited about nothing in the public school cases, just as we were excited about nothing when we were afraid to educate women and let them vote. Our greatest fears are fears of things that never happen.

I suppose I have more faith in my native South than most Southerners. If the United States Supreme Court rules against segregation in the public schools, I believe the Southern people will meet the challenge with dignity, poise, and calm. In other Supreme Court decisions the South has made the adjustment and I believe the South will make the adjustment if segregation in the public schools is declared unconstitutional. I was born and reared in the South and with the exception of eight years in college and university in the East and West, I have elected to live in the South. I have seen marvelous changes take place in human relations since my boyhood days in South Carolina. So I have faith in my native South. If our leaders are cool, calm, and collected, and if they lead in the spirit of democracy and the Christian Religion, the people will follow and we will prove to the world that we not only talk democracy but we live it; we not only talk Christianity but we walk it.

Finally, and make no mistake, it will be much easier for America and the South to adjust to a non-segregated economy than it will be for us to explain to the world why we draw distinctions based on race and color. In our efforts to justify legal segregation based on race and color let us beware lest we find ourselves fighting against a high moral law, against the democracy which we fought two world wars to maintain and against the Christian Religion which we claim to believe in. If legal segregation is wrong, we need have no fear of its abolition.

The basic issue, then, confronting the United States is not what will happen if segregation is abolished in the public schools, the basic issue is what will happen to our Democracy and our Religion if we do not get rid of legal segregation based on color.

The Challenge of Integration

By BARBARA J. GARDNER

For several years now we who are concerned have watched with pride and hope the doors of the major graduate institutions open to members of the minority groups. To those who fought untiringly to achieve this end, the admittance of Negro students into white graduate schools in the South gives encouragement and renewed strength. However, no matter how hard it is to face, there is an issue which we must confront.

You, our leaders, are fighting to get us admitted into the institutions and once there, we the students must fight tooth and nail for survival. The path toward academic adjustment is sharply uphill. In other words, students from our finest Negro colleges are, in many cases, unable to compete with students from the white race. And who is to blame? Would you place full responsibility upon the student and charge him with negligence? That I believe would be committing a grave injustice. For the student is fundamentally the same person as he was in undergraduate school. The important difference is that now he has moved over into another world of evaluation and by the standards of that world his performance has been measured and found lacking.

It is this then that is a primary devastating effect of segregation upon education — the lack of adequate preparation for competition and survival in an integrated society. Until each student is afforded equal environmental and educational advantages from infancy there can be no realistic hope for equal performance in the educational world. So long as there are two sets of standards in accrediting elementary, secondary, and college institutions, there will be two levels of performance. (When I said "equal environmental and educational advantages," I was not referring to the separate but equal theory. Each of us knows there are many fallacies in that philosophy.)

Now this basic problem of lack of preparation is a culmination of many issues. Fundamental among these I would choose physical and curricular limitations of Negro schools, and conceived attitudes of the Negro both towards himself and towards whites.

The most evident limitation of Negro schools is physical. As one looks at the plants, the teaching facilities, the experimental equipment, or the recreational provisions of both the white and Negro schools, the absolute inequality of the system is overpowering. The physical limitations reflect themselves directly upon the curriculum. And it is in the curriculum that

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Miss Gardner, a student at Talladega College, based this article on her speech to the 1953 annual meeting of the Alabama State Conference, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

we find the crux of inadequate preparation. No student, no matter how brilliant he is, should be expected to retain that material which he has had no contact with or cope with those areas which he has never had background for. Yet in the fields of open competition each student, regardless of race or background, is held responsible for those areas set up as essentials for successful living. And this is as it should be. The injustice of the situation lies not in the competition but in the fact that not every student has been given a chance to realize his full potentialities; therefore, he is unable to meet the competition.

Curricular limitations can be held partly responsible for the lack of variety in modern Negro business. Indeed in many instances, entire areas, such as business administration, scientific research, international relations, and advertising entirely escape the imagination of most Negro children as they decide very early in their educational development to become nurses, teachers, doctors, or hairdressers. The inadequate curriculum does not provide for exploration into other professional fields.

There are varying attitudes which Negroes develop toward themselves and toward the overall white populace as a result of segregation. One attitude which I believe is most harmful is that of automatic subordination. Many young Negro students consciously or unconsciously subordinate themselves in every contact with white student.

Of course there is the exact opposite attitude to consider. There is a tendency to violently oppose or attack any issue which is introduced or supported by a member of the opposite race. This is indicative of instilled resentment and is just as negative as subordination. For anytime one loses sight of the issue to respond to the individual, then a well thought out, rational response is unlikely to be forthcoming. Oversensitivity, distrust, defeatism, and uneasiness towards whites are all fruits of the evil seed of segregation.

There are all kinds of theories about the *possible effects* of integration. No one can know what these really are; but I can say that they certainly can be no worse than the *actual effects* of segregation. There will have to be a period of adjustment, and no one can visualize this period without its awkward moments. There will be situations of tension and uneasiness. Negro students now in excellent standing in segregated schools may very possibly find themselves students of good or fair standing in integrated institutions. Student social life will definitely be affected; for even with the achievement of educational democracy, there is no assurance that this democracy will seep over into social life and everyday life situations. There is only hope and a strong possibility.

So there are immediate negative effects to be expected even from integration; but we may be sure that most of these ill effects will pass with time and patience and that the overall effect of integration will be a more enlightened America, a land where no child need fear competition because of unequal educational opportunities.

In our final educational years, we,

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SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

By EMMETT J. and JOYCE L. MURPHY

THE dramatic Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign in the Union of South Africa has ended; the country is relatively quiet after its newsworthy turbulence of last year. We were privileged to be in the Union during most of the course of the Defiance Campaign and the national elections in April which returned Prime Minister Malan's Nationalist Party to power with a large majority.

South Africa is one of the few countries outside the Iron Curtain where the great bulk of the people have no voice in deciding their own destiny. There a small white minority, in a determined effort to maintain its tight control over some 10,000,000 non-whites, jealously retains the franchise for its own use. A small number of Cape Coloureds and a much smaller handful of Africans are allowed to vote in the Cape Province of the Union, but only for white Members of Parliament. Three white M.P.'s represent nearly three million Africans from the Cape Province in a Parliament of almost 150 members. In the other three provinces over seven million Coloureds, Africans, and Indians are totally without representation.

The oft-touted wealth of South Africa is grossly obvious on the white side and almost non-existent on the non-white side. Whites (who term themselves "Europeans") own 87% of the land, including most of the richer soil, though they make up less than 13% of the nation's population. They have a virtual monopoly on skilled jobs, since Non-Europeans are allowed (by law) to practice skilled trades only in prescribed non-white areas, where, of course, the standard of living is so low that there is no demand for skilled work. Further, although Non-Europeans may form labor unions, their unions cannot strike nor use any method of gaining their ends except petitioning.

This schizoid organization of society is South Africa's whole theme of life. Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country* gave a touching and eloquent announcement of it; the movie based on the book shows the same tragedy, particularly when the camera winds among the crude streets of the Johannesburg "locations." Yet strangely enough, neither the book nor the picture was well received by the small group of well educated Africans, who were preponderantly of the opinion that the book showed too little of the sharpening cleavage between black and white, as well as devoting too little attention to the trend away from

Mr. and Mrs. Murphy returned to this country last year after several months' stay in South Africa, where Mr. Murphy taught at University College of Fort Hare. Their article is presented in two parts; the second will appear in the next issue of New South.

the peaceable and gradualistic approach espoused by the author.

If we remember the fundamentally dual nature of South African life for a moment, and look at each of the two sides in turn, we are overwhelmed by the turbulent conflicts that rage between Afrikaner and Briton and three ways among African, Indian, and Coloured.

Between the Briton and the Afrikaner is a feeling suggestive of a highly exaggerated North-South Civil War memory. Afrikaner culture almost appears to revolve around the backward looking shame, resentment, bitterness, and vengefulness that have survived the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the century. In an Afrikaner memorial to the Voortrekkers near Bloomfontein are inscribed the words, "We shall neither forgive nor forget." In public schools in the Cape Province it is frequent to find associations of Afrikaner boys who mete out stern punishment to those of their own group who are caught speaking the hated English language. In the province of Natal the smug Britons often look down loftily upon the heads of the rural Afrikaners, describing them as "boorish," "uncultured," "crude," "stupid," and worse.

This serious conflict carries over in only the most limited sort of way into the race schism. Most of the small group of South African liberals are drawn from the British descended community, but it is misleading to say that this community is more liberal than the Afrikaners. The United Party, representing primarily the Britons, and the Nationalist Party, representing mainly Afrikaners, differ so little in their race policies as to offer virtually no choice.

The feudalistic "apartheid" policy of the Nationalists is stated in blunt and uncompromising terms: social segregation, territorial segregation, white supremacy, different bills of rights for different groups, a hierarchical social structure with the Afrikaners perched securely on top, and eventually even separate black and white states. The Indians, when they are mentioned, are generally threatened with a mass deportation back to India.

The "trusteeship" policy of the United Party speaks more softly for roughly the same sort of outcome: benevolent supervision of black by white, gradual improvement of the education and the economy of the black man, no social equality but no "social injustice," white supremacy, training Africans for manual and domestic work, and a gradual, hazy working things out for the best without relaxing the systems of white supremacy and segregation. The Indians, who are mentioned frequently by the strong Natal wing of the Party, will be sent out of the country as soon as practicable.

For the most part, the 1,000,000 Coloureds (descended from matings between Boer pioneers and Hottentots, Indians, and Malays) of the Cape Province sit passively on the sidelines hoping to be liked better by the whites without being resented more by the Africans. For the most part we found them to be a pleasant and friendly people who, in contrast to other South Africans, talk politics and race relatively rarely. The frustrations of their neither-nor life, acting on the old custom of drinking wine as part payment

for working the vineyards and wine presses of the Cape, have produced a disturbing number of alcoholics among Coloured men.

In Natal, where the Indians and the Zulus live in uneasy contiguity, a chronic hostility (occasionally egged on by the Indian-hating whites) once in a while erupts in bloody riots and massacres. The Durban riot in 1949 resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Indians, brutally attacked by mobs of Zulus who had been encouraged to believe that many of their troubles were directly due to the Indian shopkeepers who preyed on them. It is true that in Natal there are many Indian small businessmen, and it is true that they make a large part of their profit from Zulu trade. It is even true that many Indian shopkeepers were snobbish and pecuniary. This situation has been exploited by a few white and Zulu rabble rousers and serves excellently to drain off some of the resentments both Indians and Zulus nurture against the whites, and to discourage the unity between the two non-white groups that their leaders press for.

Challenge of Integration

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the older students, are getting the advantages of educational equality, but we have hope for those following us, hope that the opportunities may be granted them earlier, that they not only be granted equal opportunities, but that they be inspired to take advantage of these opportunities. For, for all our struggling and fighting for integration, there are yet those who refuse to see that integration entails responsibility. Any person who is to enjoy the fruits of true democracy must prepare himself for the responsibility of preserving that democracy and making it accessible to all people.

Educational democracy in America is coming. Regardless of the forthcoming Supreme Court decision, the hearts, and wills, and efforts of too many Americans are set facing that goal, and no man-made decision to the contrary can impede the steady trek toward our God-given gift of equality. Let us hope that this thought will be in the minds of our Justices as they weigh the question before them. We are not demanding something to which we have no right, we are only asking that we be regranted that which is truly ours. In this task we seek to realize a dream of a good America, substantiate a hope for a better America, and to secure for all people of all time the inalienable right of true democracy.

Contributions to the Southern Regional Council are tax-exempt.

NEW SOUTH

Published by
SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL
63 Auburn Avenue, N. E.
Atlanta 3, Georgia

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Subscription rate ..... $1.50 a year

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, FEBRUARY, 1954

To attain through research and action programs the ideals and practices of equal opportunity for all peoples in the region.